

Miracles and What They Mean

The holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had been blessed with several great miracles. Once he pointed at the moon with his two fingers and it broke apart into two. Pebbles in his hands would start saying tasbīh. He gestured to a tree and it started moving. A hungry and thirsty camel saw the holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and started bleating and crying as if he was complaining to him against his owner that he overburdened him (the camel) but not provide him with enough food, etc. It happened on more than one occasions that the holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم put his hands inside a water bowl and at once, water started springing forth from his holy fingers. And above all the greatest miracle was the incident of *Mi'rāj* wherein Allāh سبحانه وتعالى raised him to the skies and beyond till he reached so close to the Divine Throne that even Jibrīl عليه السلام could not accompany him there.

That was our holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, the greatest of all prophets, the ideal for all humanity and the “Mercy to all Mankind”. These miracles clearly indicate how elevated his status was!

The prophet who came just before him was Īsā عليه السلام. This servant and prophet of Allāh, too, had been blessed with great miracles. Even his birth was a miracle, through Allāh’s special command, so there was no biological father for him. Allāh favored him with the miracles of making alive dead men and curing blinds-by-birth. These great miracles were meant to show the people how great Allāh, the One and Only, was. It was in His name that Īsā عليه السلام was carrying out these amazing miracles. But the ignorant Christians instead of recognizing the Unlimited Power of Allāh, the One and Alone, interpreted them in a misleading manner. They theorized that Allāh was Christ and Christ was Allāh¹. For them, Christ could not be a man as these miracles were not humanly possible. Another group among them held that these miracles meant that Christ was Allāh’s son².

How much thankful should we be to our great benefactor, the holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who shut this door of misguidance with his clear direction: “Do not exaggerate (raise too high) my status like what the Christians did to Maryam’s son عليهما السلام. I am Allāh’s servant, so you should say: (He is) Allāh’s servant and His prophet.³” How misguided are the ones who say: “Allāh is Christ” and the ones who say:

وہ جو کہ مستوی عرش ہے خدا ہو کر * اتر پڑا ہے مدینے میں مصطفیٰ ہو کر

He who is positioned on the Heavenly Throne as Allāh,
Came down to Madīnah as Mustafā⁴ (the chosen one).

The Reality of Miracles

Miracles are carried out “by Allāh” on the hands of prophets (mu’jizah) or of other pious servants of Allāh (karāmah) completely controlled by Allāh’s Will. When Allāh wills, the miracle



1 لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ (Certainly, infidels are those who say, .God is the MasiH, son of Maryam – Qur’ān 5:17, 5:72)

2 وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ (The Christians say: MasiH (the Christ) is the Son of Allah. – Qur’ān 5:30)

3 لَا تُظْرُونِي كَمَا أَطْرَثَ النَّصَارَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ قَالِمَا أَنَا عَبْدُهُ فَقُولُوا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ (Bukhārī 11/262/3189)

4 Mustafā is one of the several titles of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم.

happens and when Allāh does not will, the same prophet cannot repeat it. The prophet is not granted the power to carry out a miracle at “his” will, irrespective of “His” Will. But even then, the prophet is not aided against a calamity by a miracle, he guides us: by teaching us to submit to Allāh’s Will in affliction. The evidence for this are too many to count. Some follow here.

➤ Allāh granted Mūsā عليه السلام the miracle whereby he could ruin the magical performance of the extraordinary royal magicians of Fir’aun. But it did not mean that Mūsā عليه السلام has the power to invalidate magics and wizardries at every place and in every age, as some ignorant people believe. No Sahābah or their followers, the Tābi’een, ever invoked Mūsā’s عليه السلام name for cure from afflictions of magic.

➤ Īsā عليه السلام could cure people who were blind-by-birth and give life to the dead⁵. Yet, when Alī رضي الله عنه was afflicted with a sore eye – a minor ailment compared to being blind-by-birth – in the days of Khaibar, he did not invoke Īsā’s عليه السلام name to get relief from his pain.

➤ The third rightly-guided Caliph, Usmān رضي الله عنه was faced with a very grim situation. The rebels had besieged his house and were threatening to martyr him, which ultimately they did. But Usmān رضي الله عنه never called out: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَغْتِي (O Allāh’s Prophet! Come to my rescue.), notwithstanding the fact that Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم lay in his holy grave only a few steps away. The same was the case with Husain رضي الله عنه and his family-members at Karbala. He engaged in dialogues with the opponents to avert the tragedy of Karbala but never invoked his grandfather’s صلى الله عليه وسلم name to rescue him.

➤ On more than one occasion, the holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم prayed to Allāh for help and the little quantity of food or water that he had – which was not enough for even a few men – increased immensely to be suffice for the entire caravan. On the other hand, his loved daughter, Fātimah رضي الله عنه would have to remain without food for days. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would feel aggrieved at her sorry state but he would submit before Allāh’s Will. No miracle would ease her trouble.

➤ Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم applied his blessed saliva to Alī’s رضي الله عنه sore eyes at Khaibar and he was instantly cured. But when he himself was afflicted by a witchcraft of Jews, he could not cure himself till Allāh guided him to the cure.

➤ In the night of Israa and Mi’rāj, distances of heavens and skies became astonishingly short for the holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم but by Allāh’s Will, not by the holy Prophet’s. So we see that in several journeys of jihad, the holy Companions had to travel with him long distances barefooted. The scorching sun above and the burning ground below would force them to wrap their injured, bleeding feet with rags. The holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would watch this and empathise, but no more. Because miracles were not subject to “his” will, but to “His” Will.

➤ Ya’qūb عليه السلام was able to smell the fragrance of his long-parted son Yūsuf’s shirt whom he had not seen for a couple of decades. But, he could not obtain any knowledge regarding Yūsuf’s عليه السلام whereabouts with his miracle. He could know about the current state of Yūsuf عليه السلام much later, through men who returned from Yūsuf’s عليه السلام land with information about him. In fact, when Yūsuf’s عليه السلام brother threw him into the well of their



إِنِّي أَنشِئُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ 5 (Īsā said: I create for you from clay something in the shape of a bird, then I blow in it, and it becomes a living

bird by the will of Allah; and I cure the born-blind and the leper, and I cause the dead to become alive by the will of

Allah; – Qur’ān 3:49)

native village of Can'an and reported to their father, Ya'qub that Yüsuf had been devoured by a wolf; Ya'qub could not know the presence of Yüsuf just a few kilometres away from his Can'an residence. عليهم الصلوات والتسليم

➤ Once Umar رضي الله عنه called out at Madinah: "O Säriyah! Beware of the mountain. (Enemy could be hiding there.)" Säriyah was then hundreds of miles away from Madinah. This was possible because at that moment, Alläh had revealed that part of the world to Umar رضي الله عنه where Säriyah was. But, it in no way, means that the entire Islämic empire used to be visible to Umar رضي الله عنه all the time. And that then on, Umar رضي الله عنه would pass all his commands through his miracle only. In fact, on other occasions, he had to eagerly and anxiously wait for messengers from other regions. Then comes the fateful dawn of 27 Zul Hijjah 23 AH⁶. Abu-l Lu'lu' Firoz stood behind him hiding his poisoned dagger in his robes. And when Umar رضي الله عنه started the namäz, he attacked him. Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه was martyred! He could not know the presence of a poisoned dagger just behind his back. (Source of the above: *Tauhid e Khälis* translated by Zafar Ahmad Usmäni, Sabeelus Salaam Library 14/183)

Another Misconception Regarding Miracles

A miracle is a manifestation of Alläh's Power, carried out by His Will, but at the hands of a Prophet or a pious person (wali). The Christians, on witnessing İsa's عليه السلام miracle,s misunderstood them to be manifestations of İsa's عليه السلام power. So they became Polytheists and Mushriks. On the other hand, a Muslim reads about İsa's عليه السلام miracles in the holy Qur'an and he considers them to be manifestations of Alläh's Power, so his devotion towards the One and Alone Lord increases. He now becomes a more staunch monotheist.

Some people while accepting the miracles of prophets deny the miracles of great walīs (pious men other than prophets). Their excuse is as flimsy as a bubble. They cry out that the wali's miracle is false because a prophet could not carry out the same in a similar circumstance. No doubt, reports regarding a wali's miracle may be false, but that would be decided by examining the source of information, not through this illogical reasoning. Analogies and extrapolations are applied in juristic rulings, not in matters completely beyond the grasp of human intellect, miracle being one of them.

Here are some examples which show how illogical this reasoning is:

➤ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ.

(The one who had the knowledge of the Book, said: I will bring it (Bilqis' throne) to you before your glance returns to you. – Qur'an 27:40)

The companion could do what Prophet Solomon himself could not do in spite of his higher status compared to his companion, a wali.

➤ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَّكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ.

(Whenever Zakariyya visited her at the place of worship, he found food with her. He said: Maryam, from where did you get this? She said: It is from Allah. – Qur'an 3:37)



⁶ = Wed, 3 Nov 644 CE

Zakariyyā عليه السلام was a prophet while Maryam عليها السلام was a walī woman and the food was unseasonal fruits. Yet Allāh executed a miracle at her hand while Prophet Zakariyah was not given the same miracle.



➤ Āishah رضي الله عنها had the greatest of all Prophets as husband. Maryam عليها السلام did not have any husband, let alone a Prophet as husband. Yet Allāh gave Āishah رضي الله عنها no offspring while Maryam had a child: a boy and prophet.



➤ فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْفَاهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بِصِيرًا.

(When the man with good news came, he put it (Yūsuf's shirt) on Yā'qūb's face, and the latter turned into a man with sight. – Qur'ān 12:96)

Yā'qūb was father and Yūsuf عليه السلام was son. Yāqūb's passing over his blessed hands over his face everyday could not revert his eyesight, but putting his son Yūsuf's shirt on his eyes did it in a moment.

➤ وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحُ غَدُوها شَهْرٌ وَرَوَاحُها شَهْرٌ.

(For Sulaimān (We subjugated) the wind; its journey in the morning was (equal to the journey of) one month, and its journey in the afternoon was (equal to the journey) of another month. – Qur'ān 34:12)

Yet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم who was a greater Prophet, could not get this service of the wind even when he needed it the most: during Hijrah to Madīnah.

➤ فَقَالَ أَخْطُتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ.

(The hoopoe bird said (to Sulaimān): I have discovered what you did not, and have brought to you a sure information from Saba' (Sheba). – Qur'ān 27:22)

Prophet Sulaimān عليه السلام did not know while the hoopoe which was not a walī, not even a human being could know it.

Conclusion

All power belongs to Allāh alone. He manifests His power by breaking His normal custom at the hands of a prophet or a walī. But they do not become a shareholder in His authority. So we could supplicate to Allāh alone, who needs no intercessor, no via media, to know our needs:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ.

(When My servants ask you about Me, then (tell them that) I am near. – Qur'ān 2:186)

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18 March 2011 16:10